

THIS TRANSCRIPTION IS PRESENTED (by Dr Douglas Austin) TO HONOUR THE MEMORY OF JOHN BARHAM – OUR GOOD FRIEND AND COLLABORATOR OVER MANY YEARS IN THE CRIMEAN WAR RESEARCH SOCIETY. HE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO DETAILED UNDERSTANDING OF THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN. IN PARTICULAR, HE COMMENTED FREELY ON – AND IMPROVED – MY OWN INVESTIGATIONS OF “THE BATTLE OF BALACLAVA”, “CAPTAIN NOLAN” AND THE ILL-FATED “CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE”.

I SALUTE HIS MEMORY WITH GRATITUDE.

Dr Douglas J Austin 2024

“Lord Cardigan at Balaklava - A Reappraisal”

by John Barham (2014)

The Lord Chief Justice in the course of his summing up at the close of the Calthorpe v Cardigan libel case hearing in July 1856, said of Cardigan ' But those who criticise the conduct of men placed in such trying circumstances would do well to ask themselves how they would have acted in a similar state of things. '

I am ill placed to take his advice. For one thing I have never been on a horse's back; for another if I had not suffered a genuine heart attack when faced with the long charge down the valley, I most certainly would have faked one. But the Judge's words led me to try to research my way into Cardigan's skin sufficiently to follow his reasoning accurately and to reassess whether the courses of action which he selected merited the adverse criticism they received.

Judging by the amount of material available - four biographies, numerous memoirs, letters, newspaper reports - it should have been a relatively easy task. The trouble was that Cardigan seemed to excite extreme and passionate opinions often at total variance; it was going to take the skills and patience of a very experienced sapper to pick my way through this particular minefield.

However I soon found one solid fact which did not seem to have been afforded much emphasis.

On health grounds alone Cardigan should by rights not have been in the Crimea at all, let alone with important command responsibility. For some years, in addition to chronic bronchitis, likely to become severe in cold weather, he had suffered from chronic inflammation of the mucus membrane of the bladder, a condition which made urinating at best uncomfortable, at worst extremely painful, and which typically worsened with age. (1) An extremely embarrassing complaint, which Cardigan would hardly have confided to intimates, let alone to the Horse Guards. The discomfort could only have compounded the hardships of campaigning and whilst giving proof of his tenacity and determination to serve his country, it would not have made a legendary quick temper any slower to anger.

What next stood out was the dismal lack of man management skills displayed by Lord Raglan in his dealings with Cardigan, and by association with Lord Lucan. When Cardigan heard of the appointment of Lord Lucan to command the Cavalry Division, he had contacted Raglan with severe reservations as to whether the reporting relationship would work. By accident or design Raglan allowed him to believe that although on paper subordinate to Lucan, in practice the Light Brigade would be a separate command reporting directly to him. (2) From Cardigan's arrival in the war theatre at the end of May, some weeks after Lucan, until the Army embarked for the Crimea at the end of August, Raglan lent credence to this belief by dealing directly with Cardigan in all operational matters. Thus sidelined, Lucan was understandably furious. Initially marooned at Scutari, then subsequently at Varna, he subjected the Heavy Brigade to such close supervision that

their Commander Brigadier Scarlett felt sufficiently redundant to depart on an extended hunting trip. (3) Cardigan, never one to mince words, had replied to a reprimand from Lucan stating bluntly that he was taking his orders from Raglan and no one else. Lucan complained to Raglan that Cardigan should be disciplined for insubordination. Raglan promised to do so but never did.... and so it went on. In a desperate attempt to assert his authority, Lucan published a succession of Divisional Orders addressing the most mundane matters of administrative detail culled from the deepest recesses of the Regulation Manuals, and demanded a multitude of meaningless returns which Cardigan either ignored or sent back incomplete.

Finally, on 24th August a rare sight was spotted heading for the Light Brigade camp. 'Hello!' said a surprised Cardigan 'A cocked hat, by Jove!' Indeed the distinctive headgear announced the arrival of a staff officer, one of Raglan's aides, Captain Wetherall, bringing doubly splendid news. The Brigade was to proceed to Varna for embarkation to the Crimea. It had been decided that Cardigan was to be in sole command of the Light Brigade, and Lucan would be left behind.

This was indeed Raglan's plan - above all he wanted to keep the warring ears apart. Lucan however on being informed of his intended fate, had no intention of being left behind. A strong letter of complaint was followed by an interview, during which Lucan reminded Raglan that Wellington had stipulated that a Divisional Commander was free to accompany any part of his division he thought necessary. Raglan meekly accepted the argument.

Cecil Woodham-Smith maintained that Raglan had no choice but to give in to Lucan at this point (4). I disagree. He was after all, Lucan's superior officer. There were equally solid reasons for Lucan staying at Varna to oversee the embarkation of the Heavy Brigade in due course. Raglan had made a commitment to Cardigan and should have stood by it. Instead he wrote lamely to Cardigan that he would have to subordinate his command to Lord Lucan.

A more obvious example of poor man management would be difficult to find. Cardigan's morale went into free-fall. He felt totally let down by Raglan, whom he had reason to consider a close friend. 'From this date my position in the cavalry was totally changed; all pleasure ceased in the command which remained to me, and I had nothing to guide me but a sense of duty to the service.' he confided to his diary. (5) It would not prevent him from feeling resentful and unresponsive.

As a result, Lucan had lost no time in exacting vengeance by subjecting the Light Brigade to ludicrously tight controls. He attached a staff officer permanently to Cardigan's HQ to ensure that his orders were carried out to the letter, effectively removing Cardigan's command from him; it was only briefly restored when Raglan blithely continued to task the Light Brigade on reconnaissance operations, without reference to Lucan. The situation boiled over again after the Battle of the Alma. In exasperation Cardigan took up his pen to Raglan, writing pages of examples in which he felt Lucan was usurping the command of his brigade. Procedure demanded that complaints had to be submitted through the devious Lucan, who was quick to cover himself with selective half truths in a covering letter. Raglan, with more important matters requiring urgent decisions on his mind, delayed his reply for a week. In it, no doubt sensitive to the fact that Lucan had to be copied, he admonished Cardigan, dismissing his complaints out of hand and adding a remark which would have future significance: '...the General of Brigade should bear in mind that the Lieut. General is the senior Officer and that all his orders and suggestions claim obedience and attention.' (6) In the next breath he changed tack and in his capacity as 'the friend of both', urged them to 'associate with each other'.

Before this was delivered however he had dealt a death blow to his 'friendship' with Lucan by upbraiding him in public when the cavalry got hopelessly lost during the flank march, leaving the Commander in Chief at the head of his army to bump into the Russian baggage train and, more by

good luck than judgement, escaping the fate of sitting the war out in St Petersburg. On reflection it was perhaps bad luck as he would probably have survived the war otherwise. Later when Raglan found himself in a group with Cardigan, he appeared to implicate him in the cavalry's blunder. " I simply reminded his Lordship that I did not command the cavalry" Cardigan smugly told his diary. Saul David quotes his exact words to Raglan: " I was a junior officer. The order was not mine. I had only to obey. " (7)

It was an indication that henceforward Cardigan's attitude would be ' What I am doing may be stupid, and probably is with Lucan in charge, but, I am obeying orders to do as I'm told. On their own heads be it. '

About this time a commonplace attack of diarrhoea for Cardigan worsened and was beginning to look like dysentery. When Raglan's reply finally arrived , this final proof that he had been abandoned by his friend in the interest of military correctness, on top of his daily misery from his ailments and Lucan's constant nagging must have been the final straw. In fact the distribution of fodder was the subject of yet another heated argument!

How would I have acted at that stage, Lord Chief Justice? I would have felt depressed, let down, desperately worried about my health, doing my best to avoid Lucan, probably operating at about 30% efficiency. It speaks well of Cardigan's will power and courage, and probably sheer bloody-mindedness, that he was determined to carry on as normal.

With Balaklava occupied and the initial deployment underway, Raglan sent Cardigan on a secret reconnaissance in force of the Sevastopol defences without telling Lucan! Furious, Lucan retaliated on 4th October with a General Order to the Light Brigade containing words which would come back to haunt him: ' It is not their duty needlessly without authority to engage the enemy...on no account should any party attack or pursue, unless specifically instructed to do so. ' (8) Perhaps mercifully Cardigan was spared the burst blood vessels that the immediate impact of this order would have provoked, as the reconnaissance seems to have proved to him that he could no longer carry out his duties effectively. He had reported to the division's Medical Officer, who had immediately consigned him to bed on the Shooting Star.

Barely a week later, on 12 October, he returned to his tent on the plain, there to find that he was to move up on to the Heights to command the 4th Light Dragoons and the 11th Hussars, designated to support the infantry on the Heights. Raglan had acted partly out of consideration for his frail health and mostly almost certainly to separate him from Lucan, as Cardigan's second in command Lord George Paget, deduced, ' Cardigan must needs be ordered up here to command the 4th and the 11th, both of which are usefully placed with their divisional generals, and all this must needs be upset to part these two spoilt children. ' (9) Cardigan was probably in no better health, but the realisation that he was likely to be sent on sick leave as well as worries about what Lucan might be up to in his absence would have driven him to sign himself off. The following day Paget was struck by his gaunt appearance, later writing only five days before the Charge ' I believe really he is ill; and that this will be the end of him. ' (10)

It was maybe life-saving therefore, that while the invalid was sitting in his tent that evening, dining off soup from a jug and boiled salt pork washed down with Bulgarian brandy mixed with rum to kill the surgical spirit taste, a civilian walked in. It was his sister-in-law's husband, Hubert De Burgh aka ' The Squire ' after his habit of affecting country dress when in London, who had just docked at Balaklava after sailing Cardigan's yacht, Dryad from England. Henceforth, with Raglan's permission, Cardigan could dine, sleep and breakfast in relative comfort on board, although according to Paget, he sometimes returned to sleep in camp after dinner on board (11) and he spent at least one night out of the ten before the Battle on patrol. (12) (He would be dubbed rather

unkindly ' *The Noble Yachtsman* ' by resentful and envious junior officers, but at least one more senior, Colonel Hodge, rather admired this living proof of that old army campaigners' adage 'any fool can be uncomfortable.' (13) Indeed as Donald Thomas points out ' There were others, beside Cardigan, who had their yachts at Balaclava. But they were not Cardigan. ' (re 12) In fact the title was destined to be applied positively, as Cardigan was a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron and the longest ever serving Commodore (1843-68) of the Royal Southern Yacht Club, a fact which brought about the recent (2011) twinning of the Club with Cardigan's old regiment, which maintains influence in the confederation of three which has become the King's Royal Hussars.

The sudden change in living conditions caused an immediate lift in Cardigan's health. By the 18th he was fit enough to ride out with De Burgh to watch the opening bombardment from one of the newly installed batteries. where he was heard by Russell of the Times to remark perceptively to the effect that bombardment alone was unlikely to take the town. (14)

The 25th dawned to the start of the Battle of Balaklava. The various stages of the battle will be well known to readers, so I shall concentrate on the areas of controversy involving Cardigan.

When the direction of advance of the Russian cavalry became evident, Cardigan's immediate response from the Light Brigade position was to order his artillery troop to advance within range to deploy and engage the Russians. Seeing the movement, Lucan rode over to Cardigan. To Lucan this initiative would have shown that Cardigan was too eager, and poised for precipitate action. But the anticipated clash would be the responsibility of the Heavy Brigade – he was about to leave for their position to take overall command and his worst nightmare would be any unscheduled Light Brigade involvement risking muddle and possibly fatal confusion. So he claimed he gave Cardigan qualified instructions: ' I am going to leave you. Well, you'll remember you are placed here by Lord Raglan himself for the defence of this position. My instructions to you are to attack anything and everything that shall come within your reach, but you will be careful of columns or squares of infantry. ' With that he turned his horse and went galloping off down the South Valley.

At least that's what he said he said. Cardigan's recollection, without exact words, was that he "had been ordered into a particular position by Lieutenant General the Earl of Lucan, my superior officer, with orders on no account to leave it, and to defend it against any attack of the Russians. "

Much has been made of the immobility of the Light Brigade at this stage. Cardigan insisted that Lucan had ordered him to stay put. Lucan maintained that his order had been misinterpreted - it was fashionable on the day.

Captain Morris (17th Lancers) claimed that he had remonstrated at some length trying to persuade Cardigan to launch a pursuit. . Morris had recently rebadged from 16th Lancers and had been serving on Lucan's HQ staff until three days previously, consequently he was virtually unknown to the 17th. It could well be that he would have been trying to establish a dynamic image. Cardigan denied that Morris had made any comment to him – maybe he had deliberately ' cocked a deaf 'un' , or maybe Morris echoed his own thoughts so closely that his ear was not sufficiently attuned to an outside voice to recall it later.

I believe that overmuch is made of this episode - it is perfectly right and proper for a General to ignore unsolicited advice from a junior, however experienced. And General Sir Evelyn Wood provides interesting evidence. In 1857, as a Lieutenant in the 17th Lancers, he went to India with Morris, and in his own words ' kept house ' for him for several months: he writes 'He (Morris) often told me that he repeatedly urged the Brigadier to attack the rear of the Russian mass as soon as it was committed to a fight with our Heavy brigade and on his declining to do so, begged that the the two squadrons of the 17th Lancers then under his command, might be permitted to fall on the rear

of the wavering mass. ' (15) In other words, Morris was urging Cardigan to join the fight, not launch a pursuit. In which case even Lucan's version of his orders would not have permitted Cardigan to move.

Cardigan's Second in Command, Lord George Paget, was of the opinion that the intervening ground was too rough and broken for any pursuit to have gained the necessary speed to catch the withdrawing Russians. He also made the point that Cardigan's main undisputed task was to defend his position against attack, which could well have come from a different direction at any time. Although he later said that, on reflection, he might have been mistaken about the ground, it may be salutary to recall that he was resentful towards Cardigan and friendly with Lucan and his staff members, riding with them regularly in the morning.

My own view is that there is some justification for Cardigan's attitude. I believe that Lucan's version lacks credibility.. A stickler for detail, he would have realised that a broad authorisation to attack ' anything that comes within your reach' could have been bent by Cardigan to allow him far more scope than Lucan intended. It seems more likely to have been dreamt up after the event to get Lucan off the hook.

In any event, 'C' Troop could not have engaged the Russians if the Light Brigade had been in contact. It is hard to see how the Light Brigade could have driven the Russians farther back down the valley than the concentrated fire of 'C' Troop did, bearing in mind that a Light Brigade pursuit would soon have come within range of equally effective Russian artillery fire. And indeed Cardigan received no order to pursue from Raglan or Lucan. If Lucan had wanted flank support from the Light Brigade during the initial mêlée he only had to call for it - the Royals after all had covered the same distance in time to join the fight.

But it is true that the Light Brigade's inactivity unsettled them. They were still spectators after more than a month's campaigning, when in their eyes several good opportunities to pursue had been missed. Commanders had become uptight and frustrated, with judgement impaired as a result.

Here were the Heavies in their hour of glory, but they could only look on. They sensed that their commanders were as frustrated as they were. Those positioned close to Cardigan heard him curse between gritted teeth: ' Damn those heavies. They have the laugh of us this day. ' But of course, they hadn't. The proof as we all know well was not long in coming.

It is not the aim of this article to comment on controversies surrounding the delivery or interpretation of the fourth order. We pick up the story where Lucan having delivered his orders to Cardigan moved off with his staff. The anxiously watching cavalry ranks noticed that Cardigan was obviously preoccupied. His mind would have been racing - how do we make a go of this?

Nolan of course had remained, and something in his tone in a muttered aside to the waiting aides broke in on Cardigan's thoughts. ' What is that you are saying young fellow? ' Nolan insolently drew his sword with a flourish. His reply was inaudible to the watchers, but Cardigan later maintained that he was questioning whether the Light Brigade was afraid to face the Russians.

There was no problem for anyone within a hundred yards in hearing Cardigan's roared reply. ' My God! If I come through this alive I'll have you court-martialled for speaking to me in that manner! ' (16)

So saying he turned his horse and galloped off to find Paget. " Lord George, we are ordered to make an attack to the front. You will take command of the second line, and I expect your best support, mind, your best support. " (17)

The emphasis on 'support' may well have been dictated by Cardigan's apprehension at the desperate nature of their coming undertaking, and the residue of his anger at Nolan the reason for his abrupt manner, but Paget was unaware of the circumstances and deeply hurt, replying with ironic equal emphasis "Of course my Lord you will have my best support." (re 17) As Cardigan turned and rode back to the First Line, Paget was left smarting under what he imagined to be a lack of confidence. What he was indeed lacking was any form of useful briefing. Not that Cardigan could have told him a lot more, other than that Lucan had pulled back the 11th Hussars to cover the flank of the 17th Lancers, an omission which would cause additional confusion during the Charge.

When the Charge got under way, things which had started badly for Paget got worse when Colonel Shewell, another late arrival at the last minute from his sick bed to command the 8th Hussars, insisted on deviating from the line of advance off to the right, presumably to close in on the Causeway Heights to shelter below the maximum angle of depression for the Russian Battery in position there. The reverse side of the coin was that it made the cavalymen a much better target for the Russian infantry and at the end of the day the casualties for the 8th were on a par with those of the other regiments. But it meant that in spite of Paget's desperate entreaties, studiously ignored by Shewell, the 8th Hussars were lost to his control. Cardigan had demanded his 'best support' - it was now evident that he was incapable of giving it and it would prey on his mind for the remainder of the action. (18) Having noticed with surprise that the 11th Hussars were dropping back on the right, he spurred on with the 4th Light Dragoons to try to catch up to make a close support second line.

With the 8th now well behind, they effectively became a third line and with the 4th between the two, it is probably the reason how the impression that there were three lines, each of two regiments came about (and was so stated on occasion by Cardigan himself!)

Cardigan had led a charmed life and was still in front, keeping his mind from anticipating imminent death by savouring what he would do to 'that idiot Nolan' if he were spared. He was an inspirational figure in his royal blue and cherry red 11th Hussars uniform, with his magnificent gold lace fronted pelisse worn like a jacket. At about 100 yards to go, he had picked his spot to jump into the battery between two guns when a last panic point-blank salvo was fired which somehow left him unscathed though nearly blowing him off his horse. Then he was into the battery at a speed he reckoned at 17 mph, followed by the 17th Lancers on the northern half and the 13th Light Dragoons on the southern. Private Wightman of the 17th was riding almost directly behind him.

"Cardigan was still straight in front of me, steady as a church, but now his sword was in the air; he turned in his saddle for an instant, and shouted his final command 'Steady! Steady! Close in!' Immediately afterwards there crashed into us a regular volley from the Russian cannon. I saw...Cardigan disappear into the smoke. A moment more and I was within it myself...The smoke was so thick that I could not see my arm's length around me...I was through and beyond the Russian battery before I knew for certain that I reached it.....Lord Cardigan was nowhere to be seen." (19)

In fact at that moment his Brigadier found himself very much alone – none of his Staff were to be seen – all had either been killed, badly wounded or unhorsed, apart from Colonel Mayow who had drifted back into the 17th Lancers in the latter moments of the Charge, and was to make no subsequent effort to locate his Brigade Commander.

Cardigan's momentum through the guns had taken him face to face with a group of Russian horsemen fifty yards or so further on. Virtually engulfed, he would have been killed by Cossacks for the gold lace on his pelisse, but for the luck of coming face to face with Prince Radziwill, a pre-war social acquaintance, who instructed the horsemen to take Cardigan alive.

His predicament was observed by Lieutenant Percy Smith of the 13th Light Dragoons, himself too occupied come to his aid. Smith noticed that Cardigan was making no attempt to defend himself with his sword – probably a good decision when on the receiving end of two lances - but was concentrating on evasive action to extricate himself. (20) Sgt Johnson and Pte Keeley, coming through the guns a second time with some of the second line, tried to go to Cardigan's aid but the horses of both were put hors de combat by enemy fire. Johnson saw four or five Cossack lancers around Cardigan whom he feared had been run through by a lance thrust.(20) In fact, however, the Brigade Commander managed to evade his assailants by dint of good horsemanship, receiving light wounds in thigh and ribs from their lances in the process, before disappearing into the smoke.

Apart from the dead and wounded, and a few individual stragglers appearing ghostly from time to time in the gloom, there was no one to be seen. Where was the Heavy Brigade? Where was Paget? The second line had passed through, but as far as he knew they may not even have got to the guns.

Critics have demanded why he had not seen the late arriving 8th Hussars, but Shewell had taken them so far off line to the right that they would not have been visible in the smoke and murk surrounding the battery. Anyway he firmly believed his command responsibility priority was to the first line, and to all intents and purposes it seemed that they had been annihilated. A few passes up and down the ground in front of the guns brought him two mobile contacts, Captain Jenyns of the 13th: ' ... we retired in broken detachments through the guns .. my horse was so badly wounded that I had to dismount and lead him.. I then observed Lord Cardigan walking his horse between me and some broken detachments of the Brigade. ' (re 20) and Pte Mitchell plodding back on foot.

Cardigan told him to make his way back with maximum speed or he would be taken prisoner. This showed that Cardigan firmly believed there were no British cavalry operational in the valley to the east of him. To make sure he headed off towards the guns again, to pass Mitchell a few minutes later, on his way back. (21)

An indication that Cardigan's search was more than cursory is provided by Brigadier General Scarlett who stated : ' I firmly believe that Lord Cardigan....was among the last, if not the last, to return from behind the guns' (re 20) When Calthorpe wrote requesting clarification, he replied: ' I mean that Lord Cardigan came out, to the best of my belief among the last of the first line which he commanded in person. ' A statement which suggests Scarlett's agreement with Cardigan's assertion that a Brigade Commander's command responsibility during a charge was limited to the line he personally controlled.

The anonymous story quoted by Whinyates, that Cardigan trotted out to lead in the returning column of the 8th Hussars party headed by their Colonel, and which included the Brigade Major making appropriate grimaces to the watching gunners, has to be without foundation. There was no smart column trotting in as if from St James Park. In the uncontrolled situation which Paget described as '*sauve qui peut*' they arrived singly or in twos and threes. Approaching the allied lines, Colonel Shewell was on his own, making heavy weather of ploughed ground. Private Doyle on a parallel but much firmer course, shouted helpful advice across to him. Shewell took his advice, but seemingly had gathered from observing Doyle's horse that it needed to be put down. and when the survivors paraded later, ordered him to take it to the commissary to be shot . ' I'd sooner have lost my own life as to have shot poor Hickabod' recorded Doyle, ignoring the order, and the horse fully recovered later. (22)

Nor was the Brigade Major, Major Mayow, part of any alleged column met and led in by Cardigan. His affidavit read ' Whilst going up the valley I looked in every direction for Lord Cardigan.....and not being able to see him anywhere I said to myself “Lord Cardigan must be either killed or taken prisoner” — However when I got in rear of the Heavy Brigade I found his Lordship there and he

spoke to me. ' (re 20) Cardigan might well then have reminded him that he should have stuck to him beyond the battery instead of swanning off with some 17th Lancers. There was no love lost between the two; Mayow's affidavit was offered in support of Calthorpe. If there had been a juicy story to tell such as Whinyates' anonymous Gunner Lieutenant source related, Mayow would certainly have told it.

The events of the rest of the day are generally accepted without controversy, apart from Woodham-Smith's lapse in research which put Cardigan dashing off to a champagne dinner on Dryad, rather than sleeping under a blanket next to Maxse his wounded ADC.

To return to the Lord Chief Justice's question. How would I have reacted, having just evaded capture behind the guns? Partly deaf, my ears would have been singing. My eyes would have been stinging and watering, from the smoke and the thick pall of battle fog which hung over the whole area. Feeling totally exposed, by myself, without staff or any communications, my bugler gone, Highly charged emotionally. adrenalin pumping, elation replacing terror, bordering on unbelief that I had actually survived almost certain death and had then managed to avoid the Cossack lance thrusts. I cannot believe that I would have been thinking clearly and logically about my next move.

I can understand Cardigan's insistence that he could only command the first line, in that he could control the formation, the pace, and the direction of their attack. You cannot command effectively unless you are in control - Cardigan at that moment behind the guns had the means to do neither.

The choice was either to try to extricate remnants which might be fighting further down beyond the guns, through ground held by the enemy in strength and with no idea of the strength or composition or possible location or even existence of such remnants, or to carry out the same course of action in the relatively better survivable conditions on the home side of the silenced battery. To proceed on alone without direction into enemy held territory would have almost certainly have resulted in capture, and it is the duty of a senior commander to avoid such reckless behaviour. On balance, I believe that I would reluctantly have had no choice other than to pursue the same course as Cardigan.

What were his own feelings? Speaking at Leeds after the War, ' There is one more fallacy which at times has been suggested with regard to the duties of a cavalry general. It is that a cavalry general leading his first line after getting among and attacking the enemy is to halt and receive the second line before bringing his brigade out of action. This is not the case. A general officer commanding the first line has nothing to do with anything but the requirements he immediately commands. Those who follow his support are under the superior officer of each line'. (23) And in a letter to the Press a month or so later, ' And now I have to state in the most positive terms, that after entering the battery, all rallying was utterly impracticable. Cavalry cannot rally with an immensely superior force of cavalry to their front, and two batteries playing upon their right and left rear in addition to the fire of a large body of riflemen. In such a position troops must either advance or retire. In advancing beyond a certain point, all would be destroyed....the usual manner to rally is to reform. In this case it would have been certain destruction to all. ' (24) Such pronouncements lead me to believe that Cardigan was not quite the tactical dunce that detractors make him out to be. Before the Crimea, whilst the Brigade was encamped at Yeni-Bazaar, he had tried to make battle training realistic. He would order a squadron advance, then on a given signal get every man to scatter at will until the ' rally' was sounded, which was the signal to reform. (25) ' Under Lord Cardigan' wrote Harry Powell of the 13th Light Dragoons, ' we practiced all manoeuvres and other duties he thought we might be called upon to do. One particular and favourite movement of his Lordship's was the front line advancing and retiring, the second coming up, the same as our heavier comrades did at Balaklava. ' (26) Such training was disparagingly dismissed as meaningless drill by disgruntled officers required to be in attendance in the early morning five hours before breakfast. The most

demeaning duty imposed on officers by Cardigan, according to Major Forrest and Captain Cresswell, was the requirement to attend evening stables in person. (27) It showed that Cardigan was well ahead of his time both in these demands on his officers and in his timetable for training in hot countries. Saul David in his important biography is perplexed at Cardigan's statement to Raglan 'The Brigade has had very little drill under me'. (28) I think Cardigan may have been differentiating between parade ground drill and the training for battle which he had tried to make imaginative.

According to Paget, there was no criticism in the Crimea of Cardigan's actions during the Battle until 'the columns of the Times began to tell of his vagaries in London.....his vanities led him astray when he came into contact with the admiring mob of London. ' (29) But given that the *London Times* was running a campaign against command in the Crimea being in the hands of the aristocracy, advocating the replacement of the Noble Lords by experienced Indian Army officers, the rest of the London press were at pains to stress Cardigan's modest demeanour. In none of his speeches, which were reported in full, did he make any allusion to the courageous nature of the Charge without including the entire Brigade along with himself. And if an enthusiastic crowd decided to pull his carriage manually, what was he supposed to do, horsewhip them? My overall impression is that from the time of his landing in Folkestone he was bemused, but gratified and emotionally charged by the whole circus. He was a gifted and eloquent speaker and manifestly charmed press and public alike. Even the caustic Disraeli credited him with 'sufficient modesty'. (30)

I believe that it was sheer frustration and fury at seeing their favourite object of derision and dislike being so feted and admired at home, that drove his detractors in the Crimea to will him to have displayed the characteristics which they would have expected and hoped of him. In support of their objectives they used carefully selected out of context short passages from his speeches. Be that as it may, celebrities are routinely built up to be brought to earth with as spectacular a crash as their opponents and the press can devise, and Cardigan was to spend a substantial part of the years which remained to him fighting off attacks on his competence. The Cardigan v Calthorpe libel case was one such milestone, resulting in a moral victory for Cardigan, even though the case was ruled out of time.

The editor of the '*Sun*' - less brash and vulgar than its 21st century namesake - made a telling observation that although Cardigan had his victory, Calthorpe had not had the grace to apologise formally. And although he had been silenced there were other powerful enemies waiting in the wings 'congenial spirits, say men like Mr Alexander Kinglake, the member for Bridgewater. Men whose pastime it was to impugn the courage of soldiers who had actually fought the enemy, while they had watched from a safe distance.' (31)

The bolt struck home. Kinglake had just brought out the first volume of his 'Invasion of the Crimea' as we well know, a detailed history of the War to Raglan's death. Seven years after the end of the war it had revived interest in its controversial aspects. It served to explain why Cardigan had only now had recourse to the civil courts. Kinglake's patron was Lady Raglan, and Calthorpe was Raglan's nephew. During Kinglake's brief sojourn at Raglan's Headquarters in the Crimea, other generals were unimpressed and became wary of him,; he had absorbed gossip critical of them and in particular of Cardigan. (32) 'Failing to get any redress from Lieutenant Colonel Calthorpe', Cardigan's counsel Bovill revealed in open court on 23rd April, 'and thinking it possible that these calumnies might be reproduced by Mr Kinglake, the Noble Lord has no other means of vindicating his character.' (33)

The verdict meant that Kinglake would not be able to repeat the libel that Cardigan had turned back before reaching the guns, but it did not prevent him making the most of the, by then, overworked criticism of Cardigan's behaviour after the Charge, despite repeated efforts by Cardigan to get him

to accept the validity of his actions. That Cardigan was prepared to persist in banging his head against the intransigent wall of Kinglake's prejudice, provides a typical example of his lack of perceptiveness in his male relationships. Only Cardigan's death prior to the publication of the Balaklava volume of the '*Invasion*' would limit Kinglake's satisfaction from his vindictiveness.

Thanks to Lord Chief Justice Sir Alexander Cockburn, I have been tempted into the challenge of trying to visualise Cardigan's state of mind during these dramatic events. I hope that this article may have provided food for thought. His detractors may claim that I have been selective in my choice of sources - I can only reply that they share equal guilt. It is bewitching thought that, for a man who saw everything so clearly as black or white, Cardigan's character looks to have been anything but.

Endnotes

1. Donald Thomas - *A Life of Cardigan of Balaklava* p175,257
- 2 Cecil Woodham-Smith - *The Reason Why* p137
- 3 Ibid. p152
- 4 Ibid. p164
- 5 Lord Cardigan - *Eight Months on Active Service* p69-70
- 6 Lord Raglan - Military papers
- 7 Saul David - *The Homicidal Earl* p366
- 8 Woodham-Smith op. cit. p203
- 9 George Paget ed C S Paget - *The Light Cavalry Brigade in the Crimea* p57
- 10 Ibid. p63
- 11 Ibid. p61
- 12 Thomas op. cit. p225
- 13 Edward Hodge - *Little Hodge* p39
- 14 Woodham-Smith op. cit. p207, David p374
- 15 General Sir Evelyn Wood - *The Crimea in 1854 and 1894* p114
- 16 Thomas op. cit p 241-2 G Loy Smith *A Victorian RSM* p131
- 17 Paget op. cit. p 170
- 18 Ibid. 179, 187,208
- 19 John Duncan & John Walton - *Heroes for Victoria* p60
- 20 *Affidavits* : Cardigan v Calthorpe KB1 265

- 21 Sgt A Mitchell - *Recollections of one of the Light Brigade* p85
- 22 James Bancroft - Echelon p72
- 23 *Morning Post* 2 Sep 1856 p6
- 24 *Morning Post* 14 Oct 1856 p5
- 25 Mark Adkin - *The Charge* p51
- 26 H. Powell - *Recollections of a Young Soldier during the Crimean War* p11-12
- 27 Thomas op. cit. p197
- 28 David op. cit. p340
- 29 Paget op. cit. p213
- 30 Thomas op. cit. p268
- 31 Ibid. p299
- 32 Ibid p224
- 33 *London Express* 24 April 1863 p11